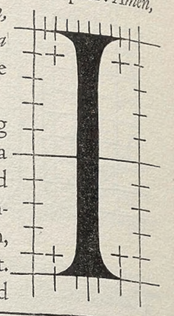
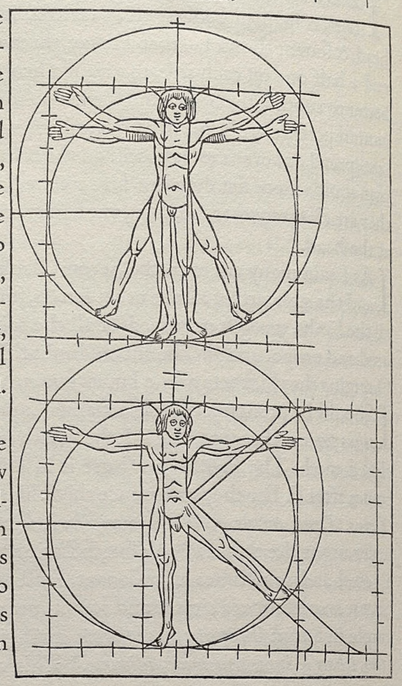
the Latins, both for I vowel and for the numeral I. Martial says, near the end of the second book of his *Epigrams:—Vnum de titulo demere Iota potes.** In like manner, St. Matthew has in his fifth chapter: *Amen, quippe dico vobis, donec transeat cœlum et terra, Iota vnum, aux* [*aut*] *apex vnus, non præteribit a lege, donec omnia fiant.*† This *Iota* stands for an I, which is used by the Latins and French for the numeral one.



AS I have said, I is the starting point for making all the other letters; whether it is kept as a straight line, or is bent and curved, or broken. And it alone of all the letters keeps its straight perpendicular line, in imitation of the human body, which, when standing upright on its feet, resembles it. Opening the arms & legs less or more shows the said briseure, as can readily be understood by the following figure, which I have drawn after the one which a noble lord and my good friend, Jehan de Perreal, otherwise called Jehan de Paris,[55] valet-de-chambre and excellent painter to King Charles the Eighth, Louis the Twelfth, & Francois the First of that name, gave to me, wondrous well executed by his own hand.



FOR asmuch as, with the help of God, I have now reached the point of telling how our said I is often used as a numeral, it seems to me not unprofitable to tell also what other letters are used as numerals, in Latin and French alike.

* II, 93, 4. *The original has 'tollere' for Tory's 'demere.'*

† *Matthew* 5, 18.

I SAY, then, that there are eight letters which are used as numerals, namely, two vowels, I and V; two semivowels, L and M; three mutes, C, D, and Q; and one double consonant, X. I alone stands for one; when it is double, it means two; when it is triple, it means three, and when it is quadruple, four. And take note that it multiplies itself no further standing alone; it adds to itself other letters, but only to the number of four of any one.

V is used for five, because it is the fifth vowel. If there is one I after it, that means six; if there are two, seven; if three, eight; & if four nine, as can be seen in the numerals following: VI, VII, VIII, VIIII.

X is used for ten, because, if we ponder well what Priscian tells us, in the chapter *De Accidentibus Literæ,* of the book *De Numeris et Ponderibus,* it is the tenth letter in alphabetical order, taking C, G & Q, as one letter, inasmuch as they pass for one another; and, too, B and F as one, because they were formerly used for each other, as *Bruges* and *Fruges;* and, further, not counting S as a letter, for in ancient times it was neither written nor regarded except as denoting a sort of hissing sound, as, with our Lord's help, I shall show hereafter in its alphabetical order.* When there is an I before the X, the X is decreased by one, and means only nine. When the I comes after X, it means eleven, and so in like manner up to four I's repeated after the said X, which make XI, XII, XIII, XIIII. Then, for fifteen, we write X and V; for sixteen X, V and I, and so with the other numbers, multiplying and adding I's and V's and X's up to fifty, for which numeral an L is used, and this in imitation of the Greeks, who use *Gni,* that is to say, N, for fifty. L and N, says Priscian in the first book of his *De Numeris et Ponderibus,* in the chapter 'De Accidentibus Literæ,' *inuicem sibi cedunt;* that is to say, L and N are often used & taken for each other, as in saying *Lympha* and *Nympha.*†

C stands for a hundred, because it is the first letter in the Latin word *Centum.*

D stands for five hundred, because between D and M in alphabetical order there are five letters—E, F, G, I, L, the K, which is a Greek letter and with which we have nothing to do, & the aspirate H, which is not properly a letter, are not counted.‡

* *It is rather difficult to see how he makes good his claims that* X *is the tenth letter, even with these subtractions, as it is the twenty-first letter in the Latin alphabet. Perhaps he means the tenth consonant.*

† '*As in the case of the other Roman numeral symbols, this was originally not the letter, but was identified with it owing to coincidence of form.*' —N. E. D.

‡ *The commonly accepted explanation of this use of* D *is less labored, namely, that it is not the letter* D *at all, but is one half of the original Tuscan numeral* ↀ, *or* CIↃ, *for* 1000.

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